

**In the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 17 with the following paragraph, which includes markings showing the relevant changes under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121:

Protected functionalized initiators useful in the invention can be prepared in accordance with known procedures. Reference is made, for example, to U.S. Patent Nos. 5,621,149; 5,565,526; ~~5,190,547~~; 6,020,430; 5,496,940; and 5,527,753. The protected functional initiators include omega-(tert-alkoxy)-1-alkyllithiums; omega-(tert-alkoxy)-1-alkyllithiums chain extended with conjugated alkadiene hydrocarbons, alkenylsubstituted aromatic hydrocarbons and mixtures thereof; omega-(tert-butyldimethylsilyloxy)-1-alkyllithiums; omega-(tert-butyldimethylsilyloxy)-1-alkyllithiums chain extended with conjugated alkadiene hydrocarbons, alkenylsubstituted aromatic hydrocarbons and mixtures thereof; omega-(dialkylamino)-1-alkyllithiums; omega-(dialkylamino)-1-alkyllithiums chain-extended with conjugated alkadiene hydrocarbons, alkenylsubstituted aromatic hydrocarbons, and mixtures thereof; omega-(bis-tert-alkylsilylamino)alkyllithiums; omega-(bis-tert-alkylsilylamino)alkyllithiums chain extended with conjugated alkadiene hydrocarbons, alkenylsubstituted aromatic hydrocarbons, and mixtures thereof; and the like and mixtures thereof.